



לעבן מיט'ן רבי'ן

FARBRENGEN
WITH THE REBBE
5735

מוקדש ע"י
הרה"ת משה הלוי ז"ל ומשפחתו מרת קריינדל ומשפחתם ש'
קליין

From 770 TO THE CITY to the World!

YUD SHEVAT CELEBRATION - 25 YEARS

65 Years. 40 Years.

Yom habohir, Yud Shevat; the day that marks the beginning of the Rebbe's *nesius*, and the *yom hahilula* of the Frieddiker Rebbe.

Obviously, this day is of utmost significance in dor hashvi'i, and naturally scores of Chassidim would flock to New York to be in the Rebbe's presence, hear the Rebbe daven at the *amud*, and join in the highlight of the day, the Rebbe's farbrengen.

The years that marked major milestones saw even bigger crowds in attendance, as many Chassidim made even greater effort to be with the Rebbe, making those years all the more memorable. Who could forget the heavenly *giluyim* that enveloped Lubavitch on and around "Yud Shevat HaGadol"—5730,

marking 20 years of the Rebbe's *nesius*, when the Rebbe held a special ceremony completing Moshiach's Sefer Torah?

Five years later in 5735, Lubavitch marked another milestone: 25 years of the Rebbe's *nesius*.

A grand farbrengen lasting nearly seven hours was the focus of the celebration, as the Rebbe addressed a number of issues; from a deep, lengthy "*hadran*" on *mesichta* Sanhedrin, to Torah's view on current events. Numerous prominent dignitaries were in attendance, many of whom had the opportunity to approach the Rebbe for a brief conversation, presenting the Rebbe with honorary proclamations in tribute to his reaching this milestone.

Forty years after this historic farbrengen, as Chassidim prepare to mark 65 years of the Rebbe's *nesius* this

Yud Shevat, many Chabad yeshivos around the world will join to experience this farbrengen on video (recently restored, subtitled, and released by JEM). As such, we have chosen to bring the story of this Yud Shevat with the Rebbe alive, for the benefit of the participants.

This particular farbrengen is also significant this year for another reason. The *maamor Bosi Le'gani* that the Rebbe delivered in 5735 is based on the fifth *perek* of the Frieddiker Rebbe's Bosi Le'gani. Based on the cycle, which the Rebbe introduced, of focusing on one of the 20 *perokim* each year, this *maamor* is being studied by Chassidim this year,

It is our hope that this essay will stimulate greater interest in the farbrengen, and encourage our readers to join in one of the viewings, marking Yud Shevat with the Rebbe in a very real way.

Excitement in the Air

Starting a few weeks before Yud Shevat the atmosphere in 770 shifted, as Chassidim prepared themselves for this special day.

At the farbrengen of Shabbos Mevorchim Hachodesh Shevat, the Rebbe spoke about the upcoming milestone of 25 years, connecting it to the concept of “*malchus*”:

This Yud Shevat marks 25 years since the *histalkus* of the [Frierdiker] Rebbe. Now, the Mishnah in *Pirkei Avos* which discusses the milestones in one’s life only addresses 20 and 30, but it does not mention 25. However, in *Likutei Torah* the Alter Rebbe says that the word כה (in the *possuk* לה לכה) refers to the 25th of Elul, the day the world was created. This is because כה—translated *like this*—refers to the *sefira* of *malchus*, which creates the world. This tells us something about uniqueness of 25.

Then the Rebbe went on to address the preparations for Yud Shevat:

There are those who want to go and print declarations [congratulating the Rebbe on 25 years of *nesius*], however, they shouldn’t spend one cent on it. Instead they should use the money on enhancing the *mitvzoim*...

Getting involved in the *mitvzoim* will be the greatest “*mazal tov*.” In general, the *mazal tov* [i.e. good wishes for the Rebbe upon reaching this milestone] should be connected to Torah and mitzvot, through which the *galus* will brighten, until it becomes a burning fire, which will bring the *geulah*. At that time “I [Hashem] will be a wall of fire around her [Yerushalayim]” with the coming of *Moshiach tzidkeinu*.¹

Following this powerful *sicha*, Tzach (Lubavitch Youth Organization) arranged for 10 mitzvah tanks to travel around New York throughout the week-and-a-half before Yud Shevat. (Remember that the concept of mitzvah tanks was fairly new at the time, only being introduced a few months earlier, in the summer. *Ten*

mitzvah tanks with complete furnishings was no small achievement then.)

Generally, bochurim do *mitvzoim* without infringing on the *sedorim* of yeshiva, and there are very few exceptions to that rule. Yet, marking this special occasion the *hanhala* granted permission for everyone to go out on *mitvzoim*, even during *sefer*. For a week-and-a-half, bochurim were completely occupied in a whirlwind of *mitvzoim*, along with *hachanos* for Yud Shevat.

On numerous New York City street corners, bochurim could be spotted donning tefillin on another Yid, handing

out a Shabbos candles kit, or engaging in one of the other five *mitvzoim* (which the Rebbe had introduced up until that point). Their activities attracted so much publicity that the mitzvah tanks and the *mitvzoim* were featured on a television show, broadcast on the day after Yud Shevat.

On Sunday evening, 7 Shevat, as the Rebbe was returning to 770 from his house, he encountered a mitzvah tank coming back from *mitvzoim*. When the “*tankistin*” saw the Rebbe, they began singing a *niggun* and dancing near their tanks, and the Rebbe strongly encouraged



BOCHURIM LEARN IN THE MAIN SHUL OF 770. RABBI DOVID RASKIN SPEAKS WITH RABBI YOSEF BORUCH FRIEDMAN, THEN A BOCHUR IN 770.



THE REBBE ENTERS THE CAR AS A MITZVAH-TANK STANDS BY.

PHOTO: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 20733

PHOTO: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 141893

them from inside the car. [The Rebbe asked the driver, Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky, “Are they just now returning from *mivztoim*?! It’s too late to put on tefillin!”]

The following morning, all the tanks stood ready for the Rebbe’s arrival to 770. When the Rebbe arrived, the *tankistin* started dancing, and again the Rebbe vigorously encouraged them. When the Rebbe reached the door of 770, he turned around and gave one more gesture of encouragement with his hand.

In addition to *mivtzoim*, as a gift to the Rebbe, the bochurim learned things in the denomination of 25; like 25 *maamorim*, 25 *blatt Gemara*, and so on.

In the meantime, beyond the confines of 770 a whole different type of preparation was underway. Civic leaders throughout the United States issued proclamations and declarations honoring 25 years of the Rebbe’s leadership. The governors of several states, including New York, Michigan, California and Pennsylvania sent letters of acknowledgment and tribute to the Rebbe. Most notably, President Gerald Ford himself sent a letter to the Rebbe in honor of this special occasion (see below).

As Yud Shevat neared, hundreds of guests arrived from all over the world to spend this special day with the Rebbe. Shluchim from across the U.S. and their *baalei-batim*; representatives of the various governors, senators, and State Assemblies; and Lubavitchers of all ages. Two hundred people came from Montreal alone (!), and a group from England flew in as well.

Evening of Yud Shevat

The Rebbe led all the *tefillos*, as he usually would, and everyone wanted to hear. So bleachers were set up, similar to a farbrengen, and they were packed with people. Reb Zalman Jaffe, who had come to New York from England to be with the Rebbe for Yud Shevat, records in his diary:

“It was now the eve of Yud Shevat, The Yohrtzeit of the Frierdiker Rebbe and



NY STATE ASSEMBLYMAN HOWARD LASHER AND RABBI YISROEL RUBIN LOOK ON AS NY GOV. HUGH CAREY SIGNS THE PROCLAMATION DECLARING LUBAVITCH MONTH IN 1975, PRESENTED TO THE REBBE AT THE FARBRENGEN YUD SHEVAT 5735.



THE REBBE DAVENS AT THE AMUD FOR MAARIV.

the Rebbe Shlita would be officiating and davening Maariv. The Yud Shevat Farbrengen would take place on the following evening, Wednesday. We rushed to ‘770’ expecting to find a large crowd of people, but not such a crowd. The service had to be held in the large Shul, and a typical Yom Tov scene met our eyes. There were literally many thousands of people present and the place was absolutely packed. Even the women’s Shul was full to overflowing...”

Yud Shevat Day

All through the afternoon preparations for the grand farbrengen were underway. A large group of police officers stood outside 770 providing security, anticipating the arrival of a number of dignitaries and government officials. These included the mayor of New York City, Mr. Abraham Beame; New York City comptroller, Mr. Harrison Goldin; speaker of the New York State Assembly,

PHOTO: JEW/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 142718



THE REBBE GREETES DIGNITARIES AND POLITICIANS AS HE ENTERS THE FARBRENGEN.

Mr. Stanley Steingut; Israel's consul general, Mr. David Rivlin; renowned author, Mr. Herman Wouk; and many others, who would be coming to offer their good wishes and to present awards and proclamations in the Rebbe's honor.

A video camera was set up facing the Rebbe's place, and by 7:15 p.m. 770 began filling up with people. On the platform behind the Rebbe's seat, the area reserved for the distinguished guests was overflowing. The farbrengen was to be broadcast live on local television and radio.

The room was packed with a colorful mix of people: *eltere* Chassidim, politicians, rabbonim, Jewish activists, and artists. As diverse as they were in occupation, they varied even more in their level of

Yiddishkeit. Yet, they were all united with one common purpose: to see and hear the Rebbe on this momentous day.

At 8:55, the crowd began singing Napoleon's March, in anticipation of the Rebbe's arrival.

The Grand Farbrengen

Suddenly, sounds of "shhhhhhh" rippled through 770. Silence descended on the crowd, and everyone immediately rose from their places. At precisely 9:00 p.m. the Rebbe entered. The Rebbe strode through the throng on the overcrowded platform, smiling at several of the dignitaries, and shaking hands with Mayor Beame.

In the first sicha the Rebbe spoke vigorously about מה זרעו בחיים אף הוא

בחיים: If after there is a *histalkus* and nevertheless the *talmidim* continue the Rebbe's work of spreading Yiddishkeit, then it is evident that the *tzaddik* truly still lives.

In the next sicha the Rebbe explained that every person must maximize his ability to influence the people around him, by acting like a "king," a leader in his environment. This happens in stages; a person first has to be a king over his own body, gaining full control over himself; and when he starts a family, he then becomes a king in his home too. Those who have the ability to influence larger circles must do so; they must become "kings"—leaders—in those surroundings.

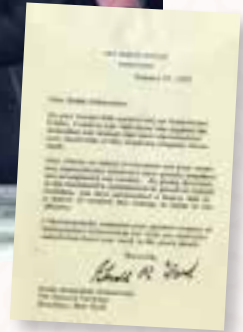
This comes with a great struggle, the Rebbe said. Once a person becomes a



PHOTO: JEW/THE LIVING ARCHIVE /108278



MR. KEN DAVIS BRINGS THE LETTER FROM PRESIDENT FORD TO THE REBBE.



king over his home, he must prioritize the good of his home over his own good—יחיד ורבים הלכה כרבים.

Similarly when one becomes the leader of a larger group of people, he has the duty to prioritize the needs of the public over the needs of individuals.

We observed a similar sentiment by the Friediker Rebbe: Before he actually became the leader of Chabad, his main involvement was with a narrow group of Chassidim. But when he became the *nossi* of Chabad, his time was spent dealing with the entire movement, and less with the specific group. Then, when trying times arose—עת צרה היא ליעקב—he cast his influence to even further circles, getting involved in such simple things as printing *aleph-beis* and opening

chadorim, activities to benefit Klal Yisroel as a whole. He saw that as a priority, even over spreading Chassidus.

Yet, when a person acts for the benefit of the larger group, it eventually helps the narrower group as well.

About the nature of the Rebbe's words that night, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Gourarie relates:

On the surface, the Rebbe was addressing the community leaders and politicians at the farbrengen. But we, as bochorim, felt that it had a deeper significance to us.

During that time period we witnessed the Rebbe dominating the world in a very tangible manner, reaching the furthest corners of the world with the *mitzvot*, and so on. This was particularly evident at that farbrengen, where countless public figures representing some of the most powerful people in the world came to pay tribute to the Rebbe.

But at the same time, we felt that the Rebbe's personal connection with the bochorim was dimming. To some of us it seemed as if we were no longer the center of attention. The Rebbe is dealing with bigger and greater issues.²

Therefore, we felt that in a deeper sense this sicha was directed to us. The Rebbe was telling us that although it seems that he was getting more involved in the general world, ultimately this was

for the benefit of Lubavitch and for us bochorim as well. Our own personal connection with the Rebbe would never be hampered, only enhanced.

Letter from President Ford

After the second sicha, Mr. Ken Davis, a prominent Washington lobbyist, approached the Rebbe to present a letter from President Gerald Ford and the United States Senate.

The president had written a beautiful letter, stating:

“On your twenty-fifth anniversary as Lubavitcher Rebbe, I want to join with those who applaud the dedication and wisdom that have characterized your leadership of this inspiring religious movement,” Ford wrote.

The Rebbe responded a few days later:

“...It was both gracious and thoughtful of you, my dear Mr. President, to send personal greetings and felicitations on the occasion of our 25th Anniversary.

“Your warm sentiments and good wishes are all the more meaningful in view of the fact that the United States has been host to the headquarters of our movement since 1940, after the [onset of the] holocaust. Under the conducive conditions of religious freedom in this great country, whose motto is ‘In G-d We Trust,’ our 200 years old movement,

The Borough President

Robert Abrams is a high powered lawyer who made history as the youngest elected borough president of the Bronx. His connection with the Rebbe stretches back to when he had a *yechidus* shortly after his engagement. He and his wife visited the Rebbe thereafter quite frequently, and they would come every year to receive *lekach*. In 1974, Mr. Abrams entered contentious political territory, when he ran against the incumbent attorney general of New York, Mr. Louis Lefkowitz. However, the Rebbe held that he wouldn't be able to win the election, and suggested that Mr. Abrams abstain from running for Attorney General until Mr. Lefkowitz's retirement. Mr. Abrams lost the election, and stayed on as Bronx borough president. On Yud Shevat he presented the Rebbe with a proclamation honoring 25 years of the Rebbe's *nesius*.



After shaking the Rebbe's hand warmly, he unfurled the proclamation. He said, "It is my pleasure to present to you this little token of—I'm sure, everybody's—appreciation for the wonderful things [you do]." As he was talking, the Rebbe scanned the proclamation. "But it is for the Movement, not for me!" the Rebbe said. [The Rebbe repeated this theme several times throughout the farbrengen]. Then the Rebbe asked, "Is Mrs. Abrams also here?" "Yes, she is," and he pointed out where she was sitting in the women's section. "I'm very happy," the Rebbe responded. "Say l'chaim, and may G-d A-mighty

bless you to go from strength to strength."

Rabbi Groner handed him a cup of wine, and he said l'chaim to the Rebbe. Then the Rebbe addressed his devastating political loss. "Don't be discouraged if I was right about our [discussion]. לכוון הכבוד לכוון the honor will come in a good time."

The Rebbe continued, "But you have a big mission also in the Bronx. You have probably a million [people] like this also, and two million... Then you have enough work for the time being. After that you will go from strength to strength."

Four years later, in 1978, after Mr. Lefkowitz retired, Mr. Abrams won the election for attorney general, a position he then held for fifteen years. (See a Chassidisher Derher Kislev, 5773 for more on this story.)



The Singer's Cane



Jan Peerce was a famous opera singer, known as America's Tenor, and he produced many records of Jewish music. A few months before this farbrengen he broke his leg, and he was stuck in the hospital for three-and-a-half weeks. The Rebbe kept track of his condition, and he and his wife were touched by the Rebbe's unbelievable consideration, which gave them emotional strength throughout the ordeal. He recovered

shortly afterwards, but he was reduced to walking with a cane. The Rebbe invited him to attend the Yud Shevat farbrengen, and he was to meet the Rebbe for the first time. When he came up to the Rebbe, the Rebbe spoke to him about a concert he had recently performed at in Manchester. The Rebbe said: "We have almost half of Manchester here," to which Mr. Peerce replied, "Yes, I saw them. My friends R' Zalmon and R' Yechiel (Vogel)!" The Rebbe continued, "They wrote to me about your concert, they say it was fantastic!" Pointing to the cane, the Rebbe added: אבער געזונטערהייט! פארגעסן וועגן די זאכן! But in good health! Forget about these things!

Soon after, he and his wife had a *yechidus* with the Rebbe. The Rebbe told him to throw away the cane. He said that his foot hadn't completely healed yet, and he still needed something to lean on. The Rebbe didn't give in. "I am asking you to please listen to what I'm saying. ווארף ארויס דער שטעקן Throw out the cane! However, it wasn't easy for him to give up the cane, because he had grown emotionally dependent on it. But his wife kept at him. "If the Rebbe said, you need to listen," she told him. Eventually he did throw it away - and he was healthy for years after. (See A Chassidisher Derher Tishrei, 5773, for more on this story.)

which I have been privileged to head and lead for the past 25 years, has been able to flourish with renewed dedication and vitality, and to make a lasting contribution, particularly in the area of education and youth activity, so vital in the present day and age.

“In behalf of our movement, therefore, no less than in my own behalf, I greatly acknowledge your warm felicitations and good wishes...”

Dignitaries Approach

Following this, Mayor Abraham Beame approached the Rebbe, and the Rebbe spoke warmly with him, holding his hand the entire time. Among the things they discussed, the Rebbe encouraged him to emulate the ways of the first Abraham, by spreading the knowledge of One G-d to all.

THE REBBE SPOKE TO HIM ABOUT THESE NEGOTIATIONS, STATING “YOU NEED TO BUY A LOT OF ARMS, SO SAY A LOT OF L’CHAIM...”

Many more distinguished individuals followed afterwards, enjoying short conversations and l’chaims with the Rebbe. They presented various honors and proclamations and keys to cities and *mosdos*. All of these conversations can be seen in their entirety on the DVD of the farbrengen.

Our Gracious Hosts

In the third sicha, the Rebbe began with thanking the government of the United States for the help they extended to the Frierdiker Rebbe. They helped secure his release from prison and (later) from Russia, then they assisted with his immigration to the U.S., and subsequently helped him settle here as well. The Rebbe gave a special thanks to the one standing at the head of the country; the president.



MR. HOWARD LASHER, A MEMBER OF THE NY STATE ASSEMBLY, SPEAKS WITH THE REBBE.

PHOTO: JEW/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 104341

The Rebbe then asked three things of the American government:

Parochial Schools

Parochial schools are schools where religion is taught, in addition to other subjects. There is a big controversy over whether the government should extend financial aid to such schools. Some view such aid as a violation of the First Amendment to the Constitution, which mandates the separation between church and state.

The Rebbe explained that this country was founded on the belief in G-d, and it is therefore impossible to say that the Constitution would outlaw the funding of religious education!

The purpose of the First Amendment is to ensure that no one is forced into a specific religion, and no religion should take precedence over another, but not to outlaw religion in schools.

The Rebbe added an interesting point: For argument’s sake, let us assume that it is unconstitutional. [First of all, there are ways the government could support religious education that are definitely not against the constitution. But more importantly] the people weren’t made for the Constitution—the Constitution was made for the people! Two hundred years ago, when the Constitution was written, it really wasn’t so important to educate children about G-d in school; children received that education at home. These

days, children get all of their education from school, and it is the duty of the schools to educate them that there is a G-d who is watching them. This is the only way that children will turn out to be upright people.

Later on during the farbrengen Mr. Howard Lasher, an Orthodox Jew who was a member of the New York State Assembly, had a conversation with the Rebbe.

He said in the conversation that he is the only Orthodox assemblyman.

The Rebbe responded, “You are satisfied to be the only one? To be an only son is not good... there must be ‘twelve tribes.’”

The Rebbe continued: “I spoke before about the parochial schools.”

Mr. Lasher explained how his first priority in his position is to try and bring benefit for Yiddishkeit.

The Rebbe: “But if you speak about building parochial schools it is also for the benefit of your district. Faith in G-d is one of the seven Noahide Laws. One of the seven commandments, the first one, is belief in G-d. That means religion. May G-d A-mighty bless you to have good news about this Assembly.”

Russian Jewry

For the first time in a public setting, the Rebbe directly asked the United States government to intervene with the Russian



MR. YOSEF CIECHENOVER, HEAD OF THE ISRAELI DEFENSE MISSION TO THE US, SPEAKS WITH THE REBBE.

government and help get the Jews out of Russia. The Rebbe said that this should be done with quiet diplomacy, not through public pressure.

There were factions in the Jewish community who believed that it was necessary to publicly embarrass the Soviets, through protests and the like, and that this was the strategy that would gain the Russian Jews' freedom. Similarly, some factions in the government believed that public pressure from the U.S. government would be beneficial to the Jewish emigration. However, the Rebbe held that public pressure was counterproductive. The only way to influence Russia, the Rebbe said, was through quiet diplomacy.³

Arms

In the period following the Yom Kippur war (roughly one year earlier), President Ford and the American government decided to stop sending excessive weaponry to the Middle East. Consequently, Eretz Yisroel was having a hard time obtaining necessary weapons. Addressing the United States government, the Rebbe said that the best way to ensure peace was not by holding back on the weaponry. On the contrary;

the only way to ensure peace was by supplying Israel with a huge stockpile of arms. These weapons would serve as a deterrent to further conflicts.

Right before this sicha, the Rebbe had a conversation with Mr. Yosef Ciechenover, head of the Israeli defense mission to the U.S. Mr. Ciechenover had a warm relationship with the Rebbe and is responsible for bringing many politicians to meet with the Rebbe over the years, where they received his guidance on many vital matters. Naturally, as the head of the defense mission, Mr. Ciechenover played a central role in the negotiations between the U.S. and Israeli governments regarding this issue. The Rebbe spoke to him about these negotiations, stating "You need to buy a lot of arms, so say a lot of *I'chaim!* They [the Americans] will give, but it needs to be used properly. In other words, there should be no need to actually use them! But in the meantime, there must be peace in Israel, and the arms can stay in the warehouse."

In the same conversation, the Rebbe also referred to the second request mentioned in the sicha regarding the Russian Jews:

"It must be behind closed doors. I hold of quiet diplomacy. It is always this way with



THE REBBE SPEAKS TO NY MAYOR ABRAHAM BEAME.

the United States, always this way with the Soviets. They're provoking them; by writing in the newspapers they will only ruin the good that has been achieved."

Personalities Present

Later in the sicha, the Rebbe went on to address the City of New York and its officials, including Mayor Beame, who (as noted earlier) was present at the farbrengen. Again, the Rebbe began by acknowledging the city for its great hospitality to the Frieddiker Rebbe during his first visit in 1929, as well when he arrived a second time to stay permanently in 1940. The Rebbe continued to say that he is certain that New York will set an example of supporting the Frieddiker Rebbe's institutions, so that they may continue to grow. For then everyone—other cities in the country—will emulate this as well.

Then the Rebbe acknowledged the representatives of the governments of various states present at this farbrengen. He extolled their assistance in *hafotzas hamaayonos* and their contribution to the good of society in general ("*tzedek ve'yosher*"), and expressed his hope that the governments of the remaining states would emulate their example as well.

Following this sicha, many more dignitaries approached the Rebbe, each thanking the Rebbe and receiving his blessing.

Compared to the above mentioned unique sichos—in which the Rebbe directly addressed governments and the world at large—the remainder of the evening (from the fourth sicha on), resembled more a typical Yud Shevat farbrengen. Keeping with the tone of the day, however, the Rebbe continued to connect the earlier mentioned subject of “*malchus*” with each of the topics he discussed. Showing, for example, how each of the five *mitvzoim* (Torah, Tefillin, Mezuzah, Tzedakah and NeSheK) uniquely possessed this element of sovereignty more than all other mitzvot in the Torah.

The hour was late. When Rabbi Simcha Elberg mentioned to the Rebbe that he thought the farbrengen was drawing to a close, the Rebbe smiled, “I still have to say a *maamor* Chassidus and a *hadran!*”

The Rebbe’s *hadran* (*siyum mesichta*) was also connected with sovereignty: He explained that the *mesichta* he had chosen was Sanhedrin, since it discusses issues of Jewish kingship.

“Tankistin”

Towards the end of the farbrengen, during a sicha on the weekly parsha, the Rebbe referred to a certain individual who had come out harshly critical of the *mitvzoim* in a recent newspaper article. The Rebbe strongly denounced this criticism, and then advised the Chassidim that they should have nothing to do with this individual in any way.

“It came to a point that he is not ashamed of starting up with *yungeleit* who are *moser nefesh* to help Yidden with *mitvzoim*.”

If someone fights *mitvza tefillin*, the Rebbe explained, his tefillin must be *possul!* That is the only explanation for his lack of *geshmak* in *mitvza tefillin!*

California

Following the *shturem* the Rebbe made on Yud Aleph Nissan, 5732 about founding seventy-one new *mosdos*, Rabbi Shlomo Cunin of California began opening more and more Chabad Houses throughout the state, including centers in S. Francisco and S. Diego. Together with the other shlichim he also developed connections with the state and city governments.

A large contingent of supporters came to the farbrengen to present the Rebbe with proclamations from all levels of government in California, as well as keys to several cities.

First Rabbi Cunin approached to present the key to Bais Menachem. Then Mr. Marvin Goldshmidt, a major supporter and close friend of Rabbi Cunin, presented the Rebbe with a proclamation from the governor and State Assembly. The Rebbe asked him about his daughter (today the mother of a Lubavitcher family):

“My daughter is doing fine; she’s in the Beth Rivkah school.”

“In New York?” The Rebbe asked.

“Seminary A, in New York. She hopes to come back to finish

Seminary B. She’s very, very happy here, so I couldn’t be more pleased myself.”

“Thank you very much for the personal regards,” the Rebbe said. And, pointing to the proclamation, “Also for this.”

He then went on to personally thank the Rebbe.

The Rebbe almost cut him off, “It is the Movement, not me.”

“Well, still in all, my daughter couldn’t do without the Rebbe,” he responded.

“She has a good roommate?” the Rebbe asked.

“Yes, she’s with the nieces of Rabbi Groner, and she’s living in Yankel Goldstein’s basement.”

“In Crown Heights,” the Rebbe said.

“Yes, in Crown Heights.”

“I’m very happy.”

When reflecting upon this conversation, one cannot help but be fascinated by the facts: The Rebbe is farbrenging on Yud Shevat with thousands of Chassidim and *baaleibatim*, meeting with dignitaries of the highest order. And yet, the Rebbe was concerned whether a young girl had a good roommate!



PHOTO: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 108268

The Rebbe continued:

“Those who merited being involved in the *mitvza* should continue, and do so with joy and happiness. They are extremely fortunate, and they have great merit! (”אשרי חלקם וגדול זכותם”) And the same goes for every man and woman who supports them, and who will continue supporting them, and who will not shirk from those who laugh at them, or try to embarrass them, nor from the *micharfim* and *migadfim*.

“Because, the truth is, he is starting up with Hashem. This has nothing to do with the bochorim who approach Jews and speak with them (whether in a loud voice or a soft voice) and eventually have

an effect on them. Either they put on tefillin, or they learn something in Torah, or they give tzedaka, or they now have kosher tefillin and kosher mezuzos.”

The Rebbe emphasized that no one should try arguing with this individual or with his sect, and that no one should come into contact with them in any way.

“And those who were involved with the *mitvzoim* did so at my behest. Not only the *mitvzoim* themselves, but also the way the *mitvzoim* are done: to go out with tanks and make a קול רעש גדול, a ‘loud and powerful sound’ in the ‘capital of Rome.”

The Rebbe added that although it is

difficult to hear complaints and criticism, one has to remember that the opening line of the entire Shulchan Aruch is “אל”בוש מפני המלעיגים”, not to be embarrassed by the scoffers of Hashem and His mitzvos.

The Rebbe then reiterated:

“As we said, no one should have anything to do with him; not in writing and not verbally; not oneself and not through a messenger, nor a messenger of a messenger.

“As to the question, ‘What will happen with the *mitvzoim*?’ They will certainly be successful, because we are talking about spreading Chassidus (together with

Michigan

During the farbrengen, Mr. Irving Cohen, a noted philanthropist from Detroit, approached the Rebbe to present a declaration from the governor of Michigan. As he approached, the Rebbe smiled broadly, and in the conversation, the Rebbe said:

“Now we have many Lubavitch activities also in that state.”

Mr. Cohen answered, “Yes, I’m busy with the Lubavitchers day and night.” The Rebbe said, “They wrote me about it.”

Afterwards, Mr. Nick Stern gave the Rebbe the key to Ann Arbor, thanking the Rebbe for all the work Lubavitch was doing there. “If I’ll have the key,” the Rebbe said while mimicking the act of opening a door, “Then I can open the Jewish hearts also, and the hearts of the population, in general.”

After the Farbrengen, Rabbi Sholom Ber Shemtov and Rabbi Yitzchak Meir Kagan, and a group of supporters (who had been at the farbrengen) had a *yechidus* with the Rebbe, where they discussed purchasing a permanent residence for Chabad in Ann Arbor.

Rabbi Kagan once related:

During the *yechidus* the Rebbe smiled, and said: “The dedication or groundbreaking (depending if they got a new building or an old one) should be for Yud-Aleph Nissan.”

Yud Aleph Nissan was only two months away! They just stood there, mouths wide open; they didn’t know what to say. The Rebbe smiled and said, “Nu?!” and repeated again, “The dedication should be in two months.”



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One of the braver souls there answered, “Amen!”

The Rebbe smiled broadly, “Amen is not a pledge.”

Rabbi Sholom Ber Shemtov relates:

After this special *yechidus* Mr. Irving Cohen, who presented the Rebbe with the key to Detroit, went straight from the airport to look at houses for the Chabad House.

We looked in to a number of options, each time consulting with the Rebbe whether to go ahead with them. Meanwhile Yud-Aleph Nissan was getting closer and we still hadn’t signed on anything. Finally, a few days before Yud-Aleph Nissan, we found a beautiful house (where the Chabad house is located until today) for sale at the price of \$150,000. The Rebbe agreed to this option and we were ready to go ahead with it.

Yud-Aleph Nissan that year fell out to be on a Sunday. After some fierce negotiations I shook hands on the deal about an hour before Shabbos!



spreading the learning of Torah and the keeping of mitzvos).

“The Alter Rebbe went through much harsher suffering for spreading Chassidus, yet he later wrote in *Iggeres Hakodesh* that those who want to be associated with him should stay far away from [fighting] tactics which are against *Shulchan Aruch*, and that they should have nothing to do with the opposition.

“I mean every single person! Anyone who acts differently, *chas ve’shalom* [and fights him] has no part in Lubavitch, and has no connection to Lubavitch!

“As for those who are involved in the *mitvzoim* with the tanks, and with a *shturem*, it is as if **I am accompanying each and every one of them!**”

And the Rebbe concluded:

“Hashem will bring us, together with all of *klal Yisrael*, to greet Moshiach Tzidkeinu. All of those who merited

being involved in the *mitvzoim*, and those who will be involved in *mitvzoim* [in the future]—from the first of the *mitvzoim* until the mitvza of Shabbos candles—should and will be at the head! Fortunate is their lot and great is their merit!”

Dollars Distribution

Afterwards, the Rebbe said that in order to connect all this with something physical, he would distribute packs of dollars to the *tankistin*, and they should give two dollars to everyone; one for themselves and one to give to tzedaka as a shliach of the Rebbe. The Rebbe also gave dollars to Rabbi Yosef Wineberg to distribute to the women.

The *chaluka* concluded at almost 3:30 a.m. On the Rebbe’s instruction, Chassidim sang the *Niggun Hachana*, the Alter Rebbe’s *Niggun*, and *Nye Szuritzi*, followed by another short *sicha*. Then the Rebbe began the nigun of “*Uforatzta*,”

vigorously encouraging the singing. Suddenly, the Rebbe stood up at his place and waved his holy hands in all directions, bringing the joy and song to their climax! It seemed that this came as a direct follow-up to the Rebbe’s speaking very passionately about the importance of the *mitvzoim*, and the encouragement to those who participated in them (by distributing of dollars to *tankistin*).

At 3:35 a.m., the Rebbe sat down to recite a *brocha acharona* and left the shul to the nigun of *Uforatzta*.

Thus ended a very special farbrengen. A farbrengen with the Rebbe that left all the participants of so many diverse backgrounds on a higher plane, uplifted by the Rebbe’s holy presence and ready to carry on doing his holy work.

Shabbos

That Friday, the individual publicized another deranging article about the Rebbe and Lubavitch, and he even quoted

certain things that the Rebbe had said at the Yud Shevat farbrengen.

On Shabbos the Rebbe farbrenged again. The farbrengen stretched past *shkia*—a very rare occurrence in those years—and the Rebbe spoke powerful words about *mitvzoim* and those who attack Lubavitch.

The Rebbe began by saying that after Yud Shevat he assumed that the story was over. Then, on Friday, he saw the newspaper article titled “Terror Brigade in the Jewish Street.”

The Rebbe said:

“When I looked at what was written there, I saw that they are writing about the Lubavitcher court (“הויה”). They should know that for the past 25 years, I am the *baal habayis* of the Lubavitcher court! And in the Lubavitcher court there is no terror brigade!”

Chamisha Asar B'Shevat

On Sunday the Rebbe held *yechidus*. Mr. Zalman Jaffe asked the Rebbe if he could farbreng on Chamisha Asar B'Shevat. The Rebbe replied that because the farbrengen on Shabbos had gone for so long, he would have to ask the Rebbetzin, but that he would see what he could do.

As it turned out, there was a farbrengen on Chamisha Asar B'Shevat, and during the farbrengen the Rebbe revisited the issue again.

Addressing the attacker, the Rebbe said that he is waging war against the *baal habayis* of the Lubavitch court, the [Friediker] Rebbe, who is the successor of the preceding Rabbeim until the Alter Rebbe, who succeeded the Bal Shem Tov, who can be traced upward to Achiya Hashiloni, Eliyahu Hanavi, Moshe Rabbeinu, and the Aibershter Himself!

“I don't need to do the work for them,” the Rebbe asserted. “They will see this matter through on their own. I only need to make sure that the bochur who goes out to lay tefillin with another Yid should not be dejected...”

“My objective is to try to bring light and to spread light...”

At the end of the farbrengen, the Rebbe announced that being that there were some who did not receive dollars on Yud Shevat, he would now distribute dollars again. And in order to strengthen the stand of those who are involved in the *mitvzoim*, the distribution would again be through the *tankistin*.

It should be noted that following this farbrengen, the attorney Mr. Jerome Shestack (who was very helpful in supporting the Rebbe's activities throughout the years) threatened the editorial staff of the newspaper that if they did not publicly retract their statements against the Rebbe and Lubavitch, he would take legal action against them. They responded with three large front-page ads, apologizing to Lubavitch.

Because of the Rebbe's encouraging words about the great privilege of doing *mitvzoim*, and that he considers it as if he comes along with everyone that goes out, many bochurim utilized the next few days to go out on *mitvzoim* again, braving the freezing New York winter weather and brightening up the streets of the city with Torah and mitzvos. **D**

1. Sichos Kodesh 5735, Vol 1, page 319.
2. It should be noted that a mere few weeks beforehand, at the Farbrengen of Shabbos Bereishis 5735, the Rebbe had announced that the annual *yechidus* for bochurim on their *yom huledes* would no longer take place.
3. Four years earlier, at the farbrengen of Yud Shevat, 5731, the Rebbe addressed the issue, citing specific examples of Jews who were stuck in Russia as a direct result of these protests.



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THE REBBE WISHES L'CHAIM TO MR. ZALMAN JAFFE AT THE FARBRENGEN.



PHOTO: MYENCOUNTER.COM

THE REBBE RECEIVES AN ALIYA IN THE UPSTAIRS ZAL ON THE MORNING AFTER THE FARBRENGEN, 11 SHEVAT.